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ABSTRACT

This Kids Count special report examines attitudes of adolescents in Delaware toward smoking and the use of tobacco products. Data are based on interviews with middle and high school students conducted by journalism students at Glasgow High School under the supervision of their teacher, and on statewide data. The report presents statewide data and highlights the experiences of individual teens with regard to tobacco use and smoking. Findings noted indicate that 33 percent of Delaware eleventh graders smoke on a regular basis, up from 31 percent in 1996 and 28 percent in 1995, with girls comprising the majority of smokers. Delaware youth start smoking at a younger age (12.5 years) than the national average of 14.5 years. The report also presents individual teens' opinions regarding the reasons youth start smoking, the impact of nicotine addiction, the difficulty of quitting smoking, beliefs about the dangers of smoking, suggestions for ways to prevent children from starting smoking. The interviews highlight the knowledge level of smokers regarding the dangers of nicotine, and the power of nicotine addiction. National data indicate that it is very easy for even elementary students to buy cigarettes, and that over 90 percent of fifth and eighth graders report having had some drug education in school. The report's final section presents one teen's view of tobacco advertising. (Author/KB)

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voices

Listening to Delaware's children talk about tobacco

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kids count IN DELAWARE

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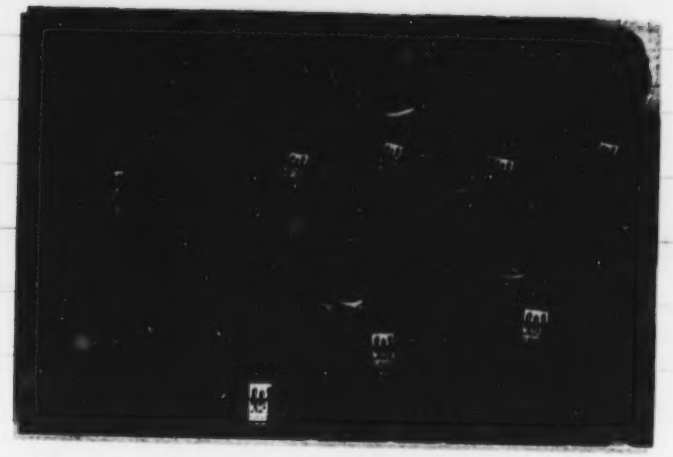

Members of the Glasgow High School Journalism team
Front row: Beverly Rivera, Mary Mraz, Christina Mullin
Back row: Carrie Crizer, Erin Anderson, Alyssa Hall,
Devon Dyal, Kelli Taylor, and Faculty Advisor Rachael Hunt
Not pictured: Anthony Clements, Dora Brown, and Carley Rivers

KIDS COUNT in Delaware and **Tobacco Free Delaware** are dedicated to making our state a better place for kids. We want to focus the attention of Delaware's policy makers, community leaders and parents on youth smoking, to better understand how we can help reduce the rate our children begin and maintain a dangerous addiction to tobacco products.

Kids Voices Count provides the teen perspective on a serious health issue. This interviewing and writing project was undertaken as a volunteer effort by the journalism students at Glasgow High School, under the supervision of their teacher Rachael Hunt. These young people spent several weeks during this school year interviewing their peers and middle school students in Wilmington, Dover and Seaford on the subject of youth smoking and use of tobacco products. The interviews were conducted with no adults present.

They are pleased to present their thoughts on an issue that deeply impacts their lives and the well-being of their friends and their families.

TOBACCO FREE DELAWARE

Note: The names of the teen interviewers and photos are real, however to protect confidentiality, the names of the interviewees are fictitious and their photos are not included. All interview excerpts are edited only for length and order of presentation. The words are those of the teen journalists themselves as submitted to KIDS COUNT.

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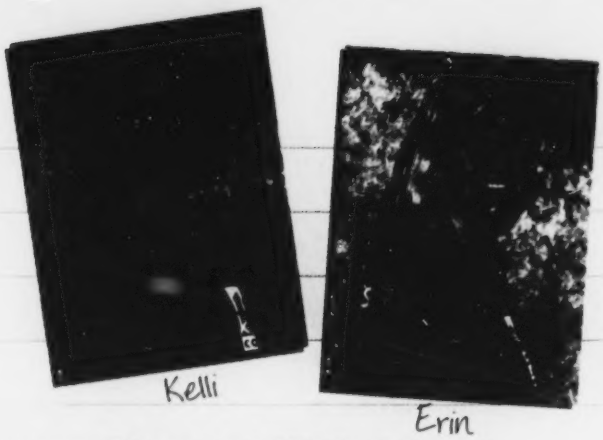

Survey: Glasgow High School

by Kelli Ging and Erin Anderson

A random survey was taken during homeroom in November of 1997 at Glasgow High School to see what percentage of the student body smokes. The results showed that 24 percent of the students surveyed smoked. Of these, 58 percent were female, a statistic that surprised us. We assumed that more guys smoked because we thought that it was more acceptable to see a guy smoking in public.

One question on the survey reads: ***"What are your feelings toward smoking?"*** Here are some of the responses we received—

"If someone wants to do it, they will. The school should allow students to smoke outside. When they are not able to go outside, they go in the bathroom. This is a worse problem than smoking outside."

"Idiots smoke. It stinks. It kills you slowly. I can't stand it."

"It's pointless, because it's bad for you and costs money. Caffeine is better."

"It's going to kill me someday if I don't quit."

"To prevent even more smokers, groups should hit the kids young, like third grade. It's to the point where fifth and sixth graders are smoking.

"It's a bad and addicting habit, but I think that if someone makes the choice to smoke, they are responsible for that choice."

"I do not smoke because I am a girl and I think that it is unattractive for girls to smoke."

All of the smokers surveyed had friends who smoke and most had family members who smoke. The surveys were very revealing as far as showing us percentages of the student body who smoke and in helping us find the views of the students toward smoking.

33% of Delaware 11th Graders Smoke

Monthly cigarette use went up significantly between 1995 and 1997 for 11th graders in Delaware. 33 % of Delaware 11th graders report that they smoke on a regular basis, up from 31 % in 1996, and 28 percent in 1995. About the only drug that males use consistently more than females is smokeless tobacco: 14 % of male 11th graders compared to 1 % of females.

Cigarettes are a gateway drug. For 5th , 8th and 11th grade students, those who report past month cigarette use, as compared to those who do not, are significantly more likely to be past month users of alcohol, marijuana and other illegal drugs.

Source: Trends in Tobacco Use 1997 — from the Center for Drug and Alcohol Studies, University of Delaware

40% in 2000?

If the current trend continues, we can expect that by the year 2000, nearly 40 % of 18 to 24 year olds in the State of Delaware will smoke.

Source: Delaware Division of Public Health

Alice, age 17

Interviewer: Kelli Ging

I interviewed Alice, a 17 year-old smoker at Glasgow High School. She seemed very informed about the harm of smoking, although the facts she listed about the dangers of smoking are straight from health class. She told me that smoking causes lung cancer, but that she was not worried about dying because she smokes. When asked if she thought smoking would inhibit her athletic ability, she said, ***"I feel like my athletic endeavors counteract the unhealthiness of the cigarettes."*** However, she knew that other addictive drugs such as heroin and alcohol were harmful to the body, but there are more methods available in order to quit smoking, so smoking could not be compared to these disgusting drugs.

Alice works for the money that she buys cigarettes with, so she doesn't feel that she is doing anything wrong by smoking. She admits that she would only pay as much as $2.00 for a pack of cigarettes and that a rise in their price would probably prompt her to try to quit.

I asked Alice what could be done to prevent children from smoking, hoping to get the advice from someone who might have been prevented from starting. She suggested that children be allowed to try smoking while they were very young so that the experience would be bad enough for them not to want to do it again. She also suggested that the children be exposed to a person dying of lung cancer so that they could see the harm that smoking causes.

Prices Up, Use Down

When Canada raised cigarette taxes to about $3 per pack in 1981, adult smoking declined by 38 % and youth smoking dropped by 60 %.

Source: World Smoking and Health, 1992

As tobacco prices increase, youth consumption drops. A 10 % increase in cigarette prices can produce a 7 % to 10 % decrease in youth tobacco use. A substantial part of the decline is an increase in the number of youth who quit smoking or who do not start.

Source: Centers for Disease Control, A 1992 Report of the Surgeon General

A rise in the price of cigarettes would probably prompt her to try to quit.

Willy, age 16

Interviewer: Kelli Ging

Willy, age 16, does not believe tobacco is bad. He thinks it is the chemicals that are put into cigarettes that make them repulsive. Willy admits that he has tried smoking and that it tasted very bad. He believes that people start smoking because they want to be cool and to fit in or simply because they're bored.

The tobacco industry puts billions of dollars into advertising a year, and Willy knows it. He notes that the advertisements for cigarettes give the illusion of health and "coolness", the exact opposite of what cigarettes stand for. Willy knows the harm that cigarettes can cause, but he doesn't mind that his friends smoke. *"If they want to do it, they can do it."* As long as they know the harm of tobacco use, they can make their own choices about smoking, Willy feels.

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Julianne, age 14

Interviewer: Beverly Rivera

By the age of thirteen,

Julianne was craving nicotine.

There is something more in a teenager's eyes, that is perplexed, and at the same time unafraid of the world. Acting like they know everything, but not really believing it, is one of the painful dilemmas we go through. With that, builds pressure or stress, a symptom that often seems to be alleviated by puffing upon a cigarette.

I started talking to Julianne, making her feel relaxed. She had no problem, saying that she was a ex-smoker, with a hurtful habit of almost two packs a week. When I asked her if the effects can be reversed, she simply replied, *"vinegar clears out everything."* I was in disbelief regarding Julianne's ignorance. So my next question was simply put, *"Did you ever go into a tobacco-related program?"* She laughed, responding, *"Tobacco programs don't work."* I sympathized with this ninth-grader. At the tender age of twelve, Newports were her only friends. And where did she get them? Her friend's mother.

This discussion then became deeply heated, because I fully understood her. You may not be able to walk into the store and get the cigarettes, but you will find a way. Saying that her friend's mother was "cool", she was supplied with Newports everyday, not even bought by her. By the age of thirteen, the nicotine was her craving. She rarely had to hide the receiving of the cigarettes, but smoking them was another matter. *"One time, I seen my mom come from around the corner (from where she was smoking), and I hurried up and puffed out."*

It also had Julianne constantly putting on perfume, and worrying about the scent. *"I always carried perfume"*, she declared, emphasizing the point by gestures. *"And I made sure that my brother and sister didn't tell on me."*

When I came to the close of the interview, we were discussing the effects of tobacco. One of my last questions was, *"Why did you stop smoking?"* She uttered, *"Because of Ivan."* I paused for a while, feeling sympathy for the young teenager at Glasgow who was killed in a car accident.

I replied *"So, you feel that life is more precious to you now?"* She looked into my face, and replied a soft "yes." I gazed back towards her face and said, *"Then, that's your true achievement."*

Easy for Kids to Buy

Almost 1 out of every 5 fifth graders say it is easy to get cigarettes and 1 out of 4 fifth graders know where to buy cigarettes. An encouraging sign is that cigarette availability to 5th graders had declined since 1996. Fifth graders report that they are most likely to get cigarettes from friends or a vending machine; 8th graders from friends and 11th graders from friends or a store clerk. Getting cigarettes from a vending machine declined in 1997.

Source: The Center for Drug and Alcohol Studies, University of Delaware

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Jasmine, age 15

Interviewer: Beverly Rivera

She feels crazy without cigarettes and has a bad attitude.

I started the interview by looking into the young student's eyes. She was perplexed, yet unsure of the questions I had yet to ask her. I told her that it was okay, and to let your mind take over your words. This is something that will be conducted in a professional manner, and try to be as open and as honest as possible. She agreed.

I started off with the first question: Do you smoke? She answered her head with a nod, and then slightly uttered a soft, "yes." *"It is okay,"* I assured her. She wanted to tell me everything, and the questions and the responses she said were only a minor part in her life. She replied that she smoked a pack in about two days, starting at a young age, in which she did not really remember. Jasmine said that she started smoking with her friends. However, knowing the true nature of the effects, she inferred, *"You can't be athletic, or can't run."* Jasmine started with cigarettes from her friends. Seeing her mother and father with cigarettes, she stole the cigarettes, and also brought them from her lunch money, which she received from her parents. She liked the feeling of a good drag, and does feel that she really likes to smoke, but the addiction made her do it. When asking her to define the word "addiction" she said, *"something that you need, and you cannot get out of it,"* although she did not know the ingredient that caused the addiction in cigarettes, which I told her was nicotine. *"Yeah, right,"* she agreed.

Jasmine told me, *"If cigarettes cost more money, then I would try to quit."* The craving had already gotten to her, and she agreed that *"it was hard."* She said she felt *"crazy without cigarettes,"* and had a bad *"attitude"* if she did not get her cravings fulfilled. When asking her, overall *"why do you smoke?"*, she answered that she doesn't know and *"there's no point."* She implied that peer pressure was around her, due to a friend and parents who started to smoke around her at a young age. I knew that she wanted to stop smoking, but something was holding her back. It could be influences like peer pressure and the people that appear in ads. Overall, she wanted to do what was right. Right now, she could not.

Kids and Smoking

Every day in the United States, 3,000 children start to smoke. That's more than 1,000,000 new smokers each year. If your child can make it to age 18 without starting to smoke, it is likely he or she will enjoy a tobacco-free life. Here are some smoking prevention tips for parents: begin your prevention efforts early in childhood; reinforce the unattractiveness and negative social consequences of smoking; emphasize the ugly effects on appearance and "sex" appeal; don't allow tobacco products in your home; if you smoke, consider quitting. Children whose parents smoke are twice as likely to start smoking as children of non-smokers; talk to your kids about peer pressure; support efforts in Delaware to raise the excise taxes on cigarettes.

From "Ways to Raise a Non-smoking Child," published in the newsletter of the duPont Hospital for Children.

George, age 17

Interviewer: Carly Riskus

Carly

George is a smoker who consumes half a pack of cigarettes a day. My first impression of him was turned around when I asked him questions about tobacco facts and he knew the answers. He truly did know more than I had expected.

When questioned, George stated that he did know that cigarettes were bad for him and he knew why they were bad. He also knew that nicotine was the addictive agent and that it was somehow added to cigarettes by the companies that manufacture them. He also told me that most of his friends know about the dangers of smoking, but do not care much about them. When I asked if he feared dying from his tobacco use, George said, ***"Nah, I'm more worried about dying when the world ends"***.

Though he was quite well informed about the dangers of tobacco products, George still believed that cigarettes were not as bad as cocaine and heroin because those are "bad things".

Not only is George not concerned with the effects of smoking on his own body, he also isn't worried about his friends who he says started smoking ***"cause it makes 'em cool"***. He said that he and his friends acquired cigarettes from ordinary stores with the money earned at their jobs. George ***"kind of"*** enjoys smoking and said it makes him feel ***"cool"***. When he hasn't had a cigarette in awhile he said that he feels like he needs one. When asked if he would pay a higher price for his cigarettes, George said that he would only go as high as three dollars a pack because ***"in the end the bill adds up"***.

George also had some interesting things to say about the younger kids who smoke. He said that kids as young as eight and nine begin to smoke because the ***"cool guys"*** on television smoke. He said that he doesn't care enough to try and keep his friends and young kids from smoking.

"Kids as young as eight and nine begin to smoke because the cool guys on television smoke."

"I'm more worried about dying when the world ends."

Addiction a Risk for Many

The increasing prevalence of cigarette smoking since 1991, the high rate of smokeless tobacco and cigar use, and the high rate of any tobacco use suggest that a major proportion of U.S. youth already have or are at risk for nicotine addiction and the subsequent health problems caused by tobacco use. Tobacco use prevention activities should be designed to prevent the use of all tobacco products. Such activities should include increasing tobacco prices, reducing access, reducing the appeal of tobacco products and conducting youth-oriented mass media campaigns and school-based tobacco-use prevention programs; establishing health-oriented social norms and increasing support from parents and school.

MMWR April 5, 1998, Centers for Disease Control

Paul, age 17

Interviewer: Alyssa Hall

Alyssa

...it started on weekends and

then progressed to a daily habit.

I recently interviewed a seventeen-year-old male smoker. He has been smoking since he was fifteen. He smokes about ten cigarettes a day. Starting to smoke is one of the biggest regrets he has thus far. He regularly urges his nonsmoking friends not to start. He is fully aware of the health risks thanks to D.A.R.E. and to school health classes, however he hasn't seriously thought about the idea that he may eventually become chronically ill because of smoking.

Like any other kid, he was first introduced to cigarettes in middle school when a few friends pushed him into taking a drag. This is not what got him started, though. It wasn't until high school when he became involved in the party scene that smoking became a habit. It started on weekends and then progressed into a daily activity before he knew it.

So far this guy either gets older friends to buy him cigarettes or goes to stores where it is known that they sell to minors. In a month, he will be eighteen and will be able to purchase cigarettes on his own.

Kimberly, age 16

Interviewer: Corrin Onizuk

Corrin

If she doesn't smoke she feels stressed out.

Kimberly started smoking two years ago. She said when she first tried a cigarette she felt light headed but she liked it because it makes her calm and relieved. Now she smokes a pack a day. If she doesn't smoke she feels stressed out. She doesn't worry about feeling misplaced because her friends are all right with smoking. They all smoke because they're addicted and feel they can't stop, and it doesn't bother her that her friends use tobacco.

Kimberly gets her cigarettes by having someone the legal age buy them for her. The money she uses to pay for the cigarettes she gets from baby-sitting and allowance. If the price of cigarettes ever went up she would probably still buy them, depending on how much they cost, but she wouldn't pay more than three dollars a pack. She thinks the reason why kids smoke is because they see others doing it and they think it's cool.

To her, kids choose to start smoking to be like others. One way to help elementary kids see that smoking is a bad habit is let them see what it did to others. She will be willing to help because she doesn't want them making the same mistake she did.

Christina

Jane, age 15

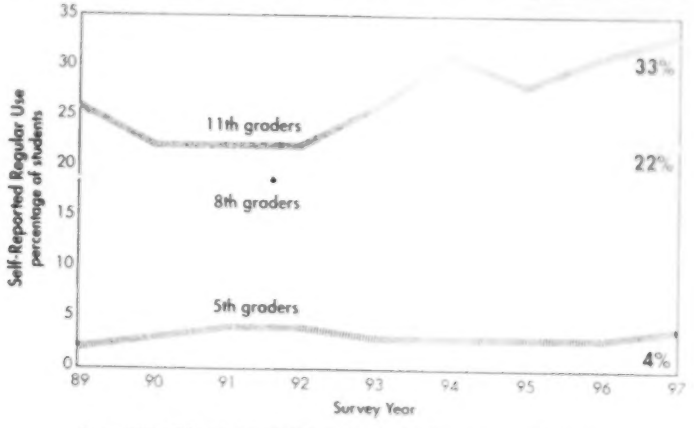
Interviewer: Christina Mullin

Jane is a fifteen year old girl who was very open and willing to talk about smoking and how it affects her life. Jane has been a smoker for quite a while now, but she is not afraid of dying from it. She figures she is going to die anyway, whether she smokes or not. The only program Jane has had on tobacco education is health class and she told me that she had already known all of the information since fifth grade. She doesn't think it would be helpful to have more tobacco education programs because most of the kids already have the information and are bored with it. I asked Jane why tobacco was bad for her and she replied, *"It ruins your skin, lungs, and teeth, makes your clothes stink, and costs money."* Jane told me that she doesn't consider tobacco as dangerous as other drugs like cocaine or heroin because the damage it causes is not as extensive.

The first time Jane tried smoking, she loved it and was excited about it. She now smokes about half of a pack per day and she has many friends who smoke. *"We mostly smoke Camels and Newports,"* Jane says. Her friends know the dangers of smoking, but they just don't care. Jane told me that she gets the cigarettes from older friends and that she pays for them with money she makes from working. I asked Jane if she would stop smoking if cigarettes cost more money. She said she wouldn't stop, but she wouldn't smoke as much unless the price became totally unreasonable. The most she would be willing to pay is $2.50 a pack. Jane believes that younger kids decide to smoke because it makes them feel older or because they got into it after doing other drugs. Jane is convinced that nothing can be done to help elementary school kids understand how bad smoking is. *"They already know the reasons why, but they see other people smoking and there are no outward signs of damage so they start anyway."*

There are no outward signs of damage, so they start anyway

Trends in Delaware Students' Cigarette Use



Source: KIDS COUNT in Delaware Data Book 1997; Data Base Diagnostic Plus (1989–1995), Department of Public Instruction, 1994; University of Delaware Surveys, 1995–1997

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Stacey, age 17

Interviewer: Mary Mraz

Mary

She was worried about dying from the use of tobacco. She was also worried about tobacco affecting her ability to perform in sports.

Tobacco Education

The only program Stacey has had in her school on tobacco education is health. She liked the program and she learned that smoking is harmful to your health. Stacey did not think that it would be helpful to have more tobacco education programs because she doesn't think that any one will listen.

Tobacco Facts

Stacey says that tobacco is bad for you because it gets tar in your lungs and it can cause lung cancer. Stacey has already quit smoking and she quit because she was worried about dying from the use of tobacco. She was also worried about tobacco affecting her ability to perform in sports. Stacey defined an addiction as something that you need to get through the day, and something that you have to have. She knew that the ingredient that causes an addiction to the product is nicotine, but she didn't know how many bad chemicals are in tobacco or how they get in it. None of her friends smoke, and she says that most of them understand the dangers of tobacco. Stacey does not think that tobacco is as dangerous as binge drinking or using hard drugs because, *"It won't kill you as fast."*

Starting to Smoke

Stacey has tried smoking before. In fact, she is an ex-smoker. She does not smoke now, and she doesn't think that she will ever start smoking again. She says she doesn't have any friends that smoke at the time. Stacey used to get her cigarettes from her friends—they would buy them for her. She got the money to pay for them from her job. She didn't really like to smoke, but she did it to be a part of the crowd. She said that she wasn't addicted, so she wasn't at the point where she needed a cigarette. Stacey thinks that younger people start smoking because they are used to seeing it from their parents or friends, or just to be a part of the crowd.

Advertising

Stacey thinks that tobacco ads are made to appeal to both kids and adults. She said that the ads send the message that people will like you if you smoke. She was probably right when she stated that no one really reads the warning labels. Stacey believes that there should not be any advertisement for cigarettes because if people are going to smoke, they should want to smoke for the cigarettes and not to be like the people on television.

Seaford Middle School

Interviewer: Devon Dyal

Devon

On Wednesday, March, 4, 1998 we took a drive to Seaford Middle School in Seaford, Delaware. It is about two hours from Newark, so as we edged closer, past the many cornfields which identify lower Delaware, we began to get curious about life in the South. We did not know quite what to expect, and it turned out to be a very revealing day.

We started in a small room with seventh and eighth graders. The first question we asked was ***Have you ever tried smoking?***

Bryan, 13: *"Once, but I didn't like it."*
Josh, 14: *"I would never even want to try. It's disgusting."*
Burt, 13: *"I did it when I was 11 because it was something to do."*
Rob, 12: *"I do it about once a week."*

What did you think of it?

Rose, 13: *"It gets me dizzy."*
Allie, 13: *"I did not like to way it smelled."*
Doug, 13: *"It made me cough."*

"They aren't as bad because they are legal."

How do you or your friends get the cigarettes?

Bryan, 13: *"My friends parents smoke and he would just steal them."*
K.B., 12: *"This foreign man sells them to anybody. I don't think he knows."*
Burt, 13: *"I take them from my mom."*
Jen, 12: *"A friend of mine steals them."*

How are cigarettes compared to other drugs?

Josh, 14: *"I honestly think that cigarettes are better than other drugs."*
Elise, 12: *"I think that cigarettes are worse, because the bad effects build up over time."*
Shaun, 13: *"They aren't as bad because they are legal."*

How can we stop people from smoking?

Katy, 12: *"If people are going to smoke, then they are going to smoke."*
Rob, 12: *"Make it harder for them to get cigarettes."*
Amy, 13: *"Make sure they know how bad it is."*

Overall, the kids really were aware of the effects of smoking. Not many had tried it yet. Of the ones who had, one or two were actually addicted. Most of them were discouraged enough by the side effects that they swore they would never try.

Drug Education Increasing

Over 90 % of 5th and 8th graders report having had some drug education in school (DARE is part of the 5th grade curriculum statewide), but only 69 % of 11th graders report having any drug education in school. This is an improvement, since in 1996 only 58 % reported having drug education.

The Center for Drug and Alcohol Studies, University of Delaware

Church youth group in Dover

Interviewers: Christina Mullin and Anthony Clemmons

The students we interviewed in Dover had just finished the D.A.R.E. program at their schools. Most of them felt the program was helpful and gave them a lot of useful information about drugs. In fact, we felt that they were influenced by the D.A.R.E. program so they knew the answers to all our questions and didn't really have to think for themselves.

Christina

Erin, age 14 Erin is a freshman at Dover High School. She says that she will never smoke. Erin also believes that cigarettes are a waste of money because people are buying something that will eventually kill them.

Jane, age 15 Jane is a sophomore at Dover High School. She was the most talkative member of the group. Jane says that she has friends that smoke, but they do not pressure her to start smoking. She believes that most people are addicted to smoking, but some people can quit if they are really committed. Erin thinks that if the price of cigarettes went up, people would not smoke as much.

Andrea, age 11 Andrea is a sixth grader at William Patterson in Dover. She believes that smoking is like suicide and if she had the power she would attempt to ban cigarette machines. Andrea believes that raising the price of cigarettes would not help to reduce the amount of smoking in our country.

Erin also believes that cigarettes are a waste of money because people are buying something that will eventually kill them.

Alyssa

Skyline Middle School

Interviewer: Alyssa Hall

Last week I had the chance to go to Skyline Middle school and talk with sixth graders about smoking. This was not an occasion where they listened to me preach about the effects of the habit. This was a chance for me to hear their opinions on the subject. There were no "adults" in the room so we were hoping that their answers were honest. No student actually smoked, however most had tried. Their views on how and why people smoked were very different.

Who do you know that smokes?

Lauren, 12 *"My older sister"*

Bill, 11 *"My grandpop"*

Jesse, 12 *"Parents"*

"I thought it made me look older."

Have you tried it, what did you think?

Bobby, 12 *"Yes. It made me cough."*

Jenna, 10 *"Last summer, it was really gross. I felt sick."*

Why do you think people try it?

Rachel, 11 *"They are curious."*

Danny, 11 *"People talk about it all of the time and we want to know what it is like."*

Cara, 12 *"I thought it made me look older."*

Lee, 11 *"My mom said she does it to calm her nerves."*

Do you think that you will ever start?

Nikki, 11 *"No"*

Pete, 12 *"No. I'm gonna drink lots of beer instead."*

Becky, 12 *"I hope not. It's bad for you."*

What are some side effects that you know of?

Karen, 12 *"It makes your teeth yellow."*

Brian, 12 *"Lung cancer"*

Shelly, 11 *"You get wrinkles."*

More Delaware Children Smoke

Currently, Delaware children start smoking at a younger age (12.5 years) than the national average of 14.5 years, and more of our children smoke than in the nation as a whole.

The National Cancer Institute in its report, "The Impact of Cigarette Excise Taxes on Smoking Among Children and Adults," stated that few measures exhibit the speed and magnitude of impact achieved by increasing taxation on tobacco products. Increasing tobacco excise taxes must be considered an essential and primary component of any tobacco control program.

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Dora

Kelli

Skyline Middle School

Interviewers: Dora Brown and Kelli Ging

We interviewed students at Skyline Middle School in November 1997. The students had just participated in the Great American Smoke Out program in their school.

Manny, age 12 Manny is aspiring to become a professional soccer player. *"I would never smoke. It makes it hard to breathe when you run. Cigarettes get you worn out and run down. I'd end up missing the goal or something,"* Manny humorously remarked.

Jack, age 12 Jack doesn't plan to ever start smoking. *"It makes your teeth yellow and your breath stink."* He says, *"It's not worth it. I'm already cool. Smoking won't make me any cooler."*

Kelly, age 11 Kelly hopes to be a teacher when she grows up, just like her mom. The only difference is that Kelly won't smoke. *"Even if cigarettes cost more, she's addicted, and she'd still buy them. I plan to give my mom all of the stuff that I got from the Smoke Out. Maybe then she'll stop."*

Bobby, age 12 Bobby is one of the few students in the class who smokes. When asked why he started, he said that his older friends were doing it. *"I steal them from my older brother. It's not bad. It don't stop me from breathing. I play football with my boys, and I breathe just fine."*

Natasha, age 11 Natasha's grandmother died of lung cancer. Her mother also smokes. Even after watching Natasha's grandmother die, her mother continued to smoke. *"I got all this stuff from the Smoke Out that says it's bad for you. I'm going to give it to my mom and beg her to stop. I don't want her to die, too."*

"It's not bad. It don't stop me from breathing."

Glasgow High School

Interviewer: Dora Brown

Dora interviewed two students at Glasgow High School, one smoker (age 16) and one non-smoker (age 18). The following transcript contains the questions as well as the students' responses.

Dora

Have you tried to smoke? What did it feel like?
Smoker *"Yes. It felt relaxing."*
Non-Smoker *"No."*

Do you smoke? If so, how much?
Smoker *"Yes. One to two packs a day."*
Non-Smoker *"No."*

Do you have friends who smoke?
Smoker *"Yes."*
Non-Smoker *"Yes, some of them."*

Why do you think your friends smoke?
Smoker *"It feels good."*
Non-Smoker *"I guess they like it."*

Are you bothered by their smoking?
Smoker *"No."*
Non-Smoker *"Yes. It makes their breaths stink."*

Where do you get your cigarettes?
Smoker *"The store down the street."*

Where do you get the money to pay for them?
Smoker *"I have a job."*

If you don't have cigarettes for awhile, how do you feel?
Smoker *"I feel bummed out."*

If cigarettes cost more money would you quit? Why, or why not?
Smoker *"No. I got money."*

What programs have you had in your school on tobacco education?
Smoker *"Great American Smoke-Out and Kiss Me I Don't Smoke stickers."*
Non-Smoker *"There are a lot of posters in the hallways."*

Did you like the programs? What did you learn?
Smoker *"No. I learned not to go to the programs anymore. They wouldn't give me a cigarette break."*
Non-Smoker *"Just fine. I really didn't learn anything, though."*

Do you think it would be helpful to have more tobacco education programs? Why or why not?
Smoker *"Yeah, I guess. I could learn what else there is to smoke."*
Non-Smoker *"No. It would be helpful to have less cigarettes. Tobacco should be illegal."*

Why is tobacco bad for you?

Smoker *"I guess because it smells bad and put holes in your clothes. It makes the bathroom mirrors dirty."*

Non-Smoker *"It does bad stuff to you. It turns your teeth, fingers, and nails yellow. It's bad for your lungs."*

What is addiction?

Smoker *"You always want more of something because it is really good."*

Non-Smoker *"You feel like you need something to make you feel better."*

How many bad chemicals are in tobacco? Do companies add these to the cigarettes? How do they get in there?

Smoker *"Twelve. The companies put them there."*

Non-Smoker *"7,013. Some companies do. They soak the tobacco in chemicals."*

Do you think tobacco is as dangerous as binge drinking or using hard drugs like heroin or cocaine? Why or why not?

Smoker *"No. They all feel the same to me."*

Non-Smoker *"Yes. They are addictive and harmful to the respiratory system."*

Why do you think young people, even 8 and 9 years old, decide to smoke?

Smoker *"Cause their friends do it."*

Non-Smoker *"They think it looks cool."*

Do you have some ideas on how to help elementary school kids understand why smoking is a very bad habit?

Smoker *"Show them the lungs and people with throat cancer."*

Non-Smoker *"Get them to associate cigarettes with pain."*

Would you be interested in helping keep your friends and younger children tobacco-free? Why, or why not?

Smoker *"Sure, but how?"*

Non-Smoker *"Yes. Tobacco is bad."*

Do you know how much money the cigarette industry makes a year?

Smoker *"Billions of dollars."*

Non-Smoker *"Approximately $73 billion."*

Do you think tobacco ads appeal to kids, or just adults?

Smoker *"They appeal to everyone."*

Non-Smoker *"Kids."*

What kind of images do the ads send? Do you think people read the little health warnings?

Smoker *"They make it seem cool. Nobody reads them."*

Non-Smoker *"Cigarettes are cool. People read them but they don't listen."*

If you were a "dictator" of the U.S., what would you do about tobacco advertising and why?

Smoker *"I wouldn't do anything."*

Non-Smoker *"I would make tobacco illegal."*

Body Parts

by Kelli Ging

We've all been taught that smoking is bad for us, but why? Here's what it does to your body:

Face Smoking speeds up the aging process and is associated with the wrinkles that form at younger ages on the faces of smokers, especially females.

Mouth Smoking gives you bad breath, creates cavities, and causes tooth loss. Cigarettes stain your teeth and cause oral cancer. Yum.

Heart Frequent smokers triple their risks of having a heart attack because smoking increases the development of atherosclerosis in the coronary arteries. Yeah.

Lungs Smoking dumps tar and other toxic chemicals in to your lungs, chemicals that kill lung tissue and cause bronchitis, emphysema, and cancer. They also damage air sacs in the lungs and are then absorbed into the blood, causing diseases in other body parts.

Legs Smokers get tired quicker and can't run as far for as long as nonsmokers can because smoking interferes with the flow of blood to your extremities.

Stomach Smoking causes overproduction of stomach acids, which can lead to ulcers.

Brain Smoking causes migraine headaches and strokes, which are often deadly.

Those other Body Parts...

Smoking causes impotence and low sperm count in males. It increases the risk of birth defects as well as miscarriage and cervical cancer in women.

Nothing Kills Like Tobacco

At the current rate of tobacco use, close to 17,000 Delaware children now under the age of 18 will die prematurely directly due to smoking-related illnesses.

Delaware Division of Public Health

High Cancer Rate in Delaware

Delaware has one of the highest cancer rates in the U.S., second only to Washington, D.C. Delaware's lung cancer rate is 20% higher than the U.S. average, making it the 5th highest among the states (1990-1994). For women, our rate is the 3rd highest in the nation. If there was **no** lung cancer in Delaware, our death rate would have **declined** 14 % since 1950, instead of **increasing** by 22 %.

Delaware Division of Public Health

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The Advertising Trap

by Kelli Ging

Tobacco company advertising and promotion campaigns often appeal to and specifically target people ages 18 and younger. This age group accounts for 90 percent of all new smokers. That means 3,000 kids start smoking every day. These smokers replace the adult smokers who quit or die from smoking-related diseases, such as lung cancer.

The tobacco industry spent $16.5 million a day in 1993 to advertise and promote smoking, and teens were the main target. It worked, because the three most heavily advertised brands of cigarettes, Marlboro, Newport and Camel, were bought by 86 percent of teen smokers. They fool kids into buying cigarettes by advertising positive images, using color and style to add to their appeal. Notice that in cigarette advertisements, you are never told that smoking causes your lungs to become black and dirty. You are given the image that smoking makes you look strong because the man in the ad is riding a bronco. What they don't portray is the smell that lingers on the smoker's hair; that smoking makes you look slim and pretty because the woman in the ad is gorgeous and surrounded by men. What they don't portray is the smell that lingers on the smoker's breath, and clothing , nor do they show the stains that the smoke leaves on the fingers and teeth. Besides the harm it causes to the appearance, it causes long term damage to the lungs and skin.

So don't let advertising fool you!

Statistics for this article taken from "Tobacco Advertising: The Teenage Target," American Medical Association

Ads Target Children

According to documents revealed in January of 1998 from a California lawsuit, RJ Reynolds executives have known for decades that almost all new smokers are children. Documents marked., "RJR SECRET" show the Joe Camel advertising campaign was designed to lure teenagers as young as 12 away from Philip Morris' Marlboro brand. In a 1974 board presentation, an RJ Reynolds marketing vice president pointed out: "The growing importance of the young adult—defined as 14 to 24 age group—in the cigarette market, because they represent tomorrow's cigarette business."

San Francisco Chronicle, January 15, 1998

The photographs in this book were taken by Glasgow student photographer Jennifer Louie.

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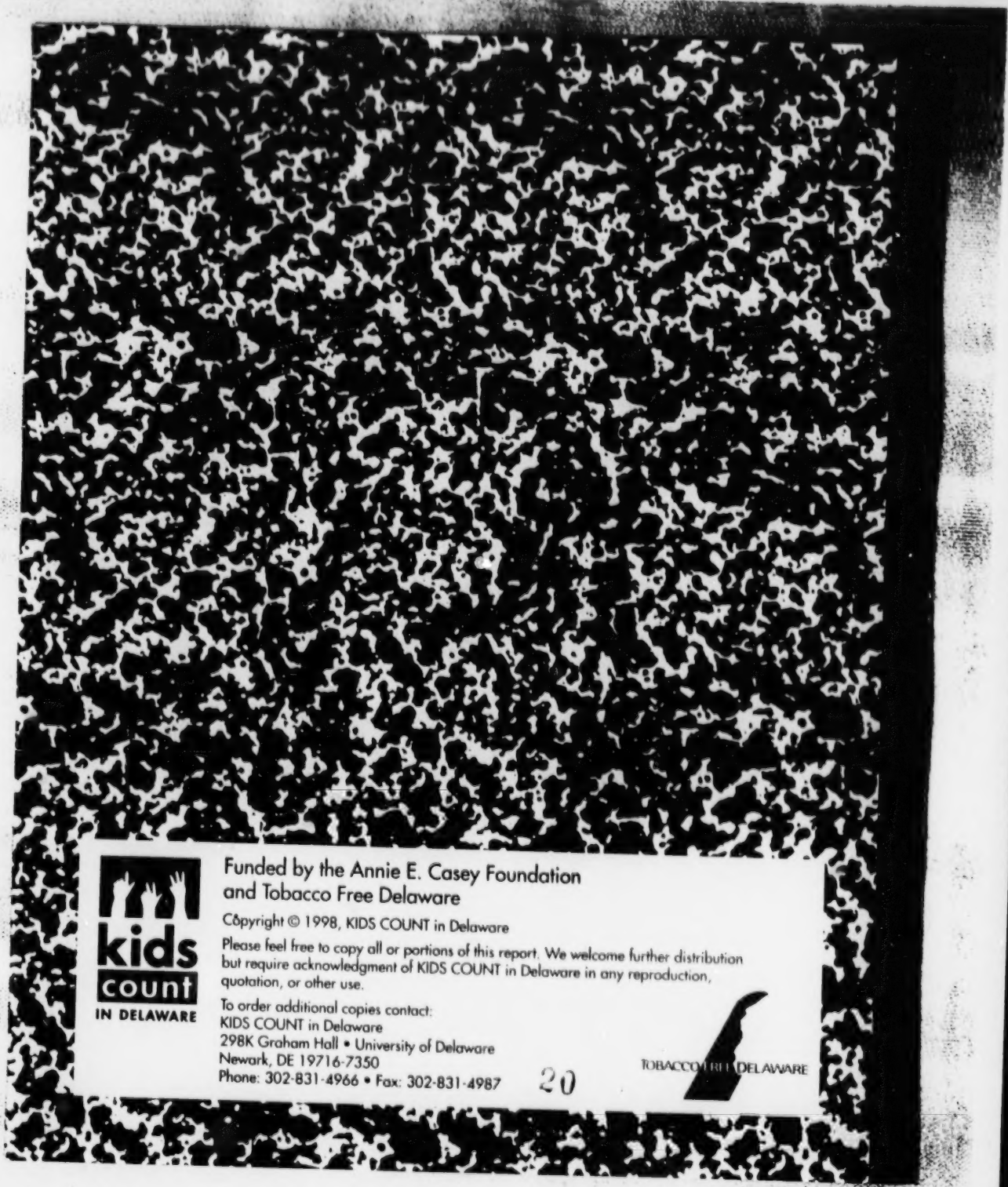

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